

Appl. No. 10/616,020
Office Action Mailed November 23, 2005
Response transmitted February 6, 2006

Attorney Docket 285/536

REMARKS

1. The application was filed with Claims 1-68. The present Office Action rejects all claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of several references.

2. The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of an interview on January 27, 2006. The undersigned and the Examiner discussed numerous of the claims and the references. Agreement was reached on Claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 32, and 33. In view of the agreement, amendments have been made to several independent claims of the application and Claims 3 and 32 have been cancelled.

3. Agreement was reached on Claim 3, because the references, especially U.S. Pat. No. 5,917,180 to Ernest Reimer et al. and U.S. Pat. No. 6,788,295, to Robert Inkster, do not teach or suggest an optical sensor formed by two optical fibers that are fused together side by side at one end. Claim 3 has been cancelled and Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 3, for which support is found in Claim 3 as filed and in the specification in as-filed paragraph [0040]. The Examiner is requested to allow Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2 and 4-17.

4. Agreement was reached on Claim 2, because the references, especially U.S. Pat. No. 5,917,180 to Ernest Reimer et al. and U.S. Pat. No. 6,788,295, to Robert Inkster, do not teach a sensing system with a sensing pad comprising a laminate structure that comprises two layers of silicone foam with an adhesive inbetween. Claim 18 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 2. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 18 and dependent Claims 19-23.

Claim 39 was not discussed, but includes the Claim 2 limitations of a sensing pad comprising two layers of silicone foam joined by an adhesive. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 39 and dependent Claims 40-46.

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5. Agreement was reached on Claim 10 because the references, especially U.S. Statutory Invention Registration (SIR) No. H322 to Brent Simons, and U.S. Pat. No. 4,369,525 to Jean Breton et al., do not teach or suggest use of an optical sensor as a control sensor for adjusting the array of optical sensors. Claim 24 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 10. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 24 and dependent Claims 25-29.

6. Agreement was reached on Claims 32 and 33, because the prior art cited does not teach or suggest a method of manufacturing a system for sensing a load using optical fibers, the method comprising a step of trimming two optical fibers at a time, wherein the step of trimming joins ends of the fibers to form an optical sensor. The references also do not teach such a method wherein the optical fibers are plastic and the step of trimming is performed with a laser. The limitations of Claim 32 have been incorporated into amended independent Claim 30, and Claim 32 has been cancelled. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 30 and dependent Claims 31 and 33-38.

7. Agreement was not reached on Claim 47. However, agreement was reached on Claim 7, because the references, especially U.S. Pat. Appl. Publ. 2001-0054682 to Thomas Bennett et al. and U.S. Pat. No. 6,353,394 to Junji Meda et al., do not teach or suggest cutouts for a trench in a seat or in a sensing pad for a seat. Claim 47 has been amended to recite the limitations of agreed upon Claim 7. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 47 and dependent Claims 48-56.

8. Agreement was not reached on Claim 57. However, Claim 57 has been amended to recite the limitations of agreed-upon Claim 3. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 57 and dependent Claims 58-64.

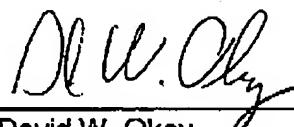
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9. Agreement was not reached on Claim 65. Claim 65 has been amended to recite the limitations of agreed-upon Claim 10. The Examiner is respectfully requested to allow Claim 65 and dependent Claims 66-68.

10. The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the amendment, to withdraw the rejections to the application, and to allow Claims 1-2, 4-31, and 33-68 of the application. If a telephone call to the undersigned would be of use to the Examiner, or would help to expedite prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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